

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SAJ-01 SAM-01 NIC-01 DRC-01 /093 W

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P 160520Z MAR 74

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9976

INFO USLO PEKING PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 2956

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CH

SUBJECT: THIRD EDITORIAL ON MOVEMENT ACKNOWLEDGES THERE  
ARE TARGETS

SUMMARY. IN ITS THIRD EDITORIAL ON THE PRC'S INTERNAL  
POLITICAL MOVEMENT PEOPLE'S DAILY STATES THAT SOME "COMRADES"  
HAVE MADE "SERIOUS MISTAKES." END SUMMARY.

1. IN ITS THIRD  
EDITORIAL ON THE PRC INTERNAL POLITICAL  
MOVEMENT, PEOPLE'S DAILY MARCH 15 ACKNOWLEDGED FOR THE FIRST  
TIME THAT THERE ARE "COMRADES IN OUR OWN RANKS WHO HAVE MADE  
MISTAKES AND EVEN SERIOUS MISTAKES." THERE IS A MAJOR ADVANCE  
IN THE MOVEMENT AND MAY MARK A CRITICAL NEW PHASE IN  
WHICH VICTIMS WILL BECOME TARGETED. THE EDITORIAL CALLS  
FOR AN ATTITUDE OF HELPING THE ERRANT TO "CHANGE THEIR STAND  
AND RETURN" TO MAO'S LINE, BUT WE WOULD BE WARY OF PUTTING  
WEIGHT ON THIS AS MITIGATING THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE AFFAIR.  
MAO WAS PURPORTEDLY INSISTING ON "SAVING" LIN PIAO AS LATE  
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AS SEPTEMBER 1971 WHEN LIN FELL IN APPARENTLY DESPERATE

LAST ACTS OF RESISTANCE.

2. THE EDITORIAL GIVES NO CLEAR INDICATION AS TO WHO THE ERRANT COMRADES ARE, BUT IT SETS OUT CHARGES AGAINST THEM: OPPOSING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND SEEKING TO RESTORE CAPITALISM; SEEKING TO REVERSE " VERDICTS" ON THOSE ALREADY CONDEMNED; AND--MOST IMMEDIATELY--TRYING TO "ATTACK, SLANDER AND SABOTAGE THE MOVEMENT TO CRITICIZE LIN PIAO AND CONFUCIUS." THIS LATTER CHARGE WE TAKE TO MEAN THAT THOSE ACCUSED ARE RESISTING AND FIGHTING BACK.

3. THE STRUGGLE IS PRESUMABLY AT THE UPPER LEVEL OF LEADERSHIP. IN ITS SECOND PARAGRAPH THE EDITORIAL RECOUNTS AN INCIDENT FROM THE LATER HAN DYNASTY IN WHICH A SUCCESSION ISSUE WAS PRESSED ON THE GROUND THAT THE COUNTRY HAD TO HAVE AN EMPEROR, AND THIS MAY BE INTENDED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE SUCCESSION QUESTION LIES BEHIND THE CURRENT STRUGGLE.

4. THE EDITORIAL IS REMARKABLY TERSE, THE SHORTEST OF THE THREE THAT HAVE APPEARED IN THE SIX WEEKS SINCE THE STRUGGLE WAS LAUNCHED AS A NATIONAL MASS MOVEMENT. WE ARE STRUCK BY THE REPETITION IN FOUR OF THE SEVEN PARAGRAPHS OF THE CLASSICAL QUOTATION CHARGING CONFUCIUS WITH INTENDING TO "REVIVE STATES THAT ARE EXTINCT, RESTORE FAMILIES THAT HAVE LOST THEIR POSITIONS, AND CALL TO OFFICE THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN INTO OBSCURITY." THE MEANING REMAINS HOWEVER, SUSCEPTIBLE TO VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS IN ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ULTIMATE VICTIMS OF THE STRUGGLE.

5. THE EDITORIAL'S JUDGMENT THAT THE MOVEMENT IS DEVELOPING " SOUNDLY," COUPLED WITH THE SEEMINGLY MEASURED THREE-WEEK INTERVAL THAT HAS BEEN OBSERVED BETWEEN EDITORIALS, GIVES AN IMPRESSION THAT THE MOVEMENT IS FOLLOWING A PLAN. THUS IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT WE ARE WATCHING THE PREPARATION OF PUBLIC OPINION TO ACCEPT A DECISION ON VICTIMS WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN REACHED. WE ARE SKEPTICAL OF THIS VIEW AND INCLINED TO SPECULATE THAT THE ULTIMATE VICTIMS HAVE NOT YET BEEN DECISIVELY FIXED AND SENTENCE PASSED. AT MOST, THERE HAVE BEEN INDICTMENTS, PROBABLY WITH COUNTERCHARGES. IN THIS VIEW, THERE IS STILL CRITICAL STRUGGLE AHEAD.  
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